

Donna Trinidad

ADC #142975

Arizona Department Of Corrections Perryville

Goodyear, AZ 85395

LITMUS HONOR

On the subject of "honoring" sacrifice and commitment of our nations Veterans, everyone calling themselves American and those globally who's liberty and freedom can be traced back directly to our Veterans, should at least once in their lifetime give considerable thought introspect to this issue.

I have participated in the displays of appreciation on "Veterans Day." Including the speeches offered on behalf of these brave and courageous people. However, when subjecting myself to the "Litmus test" of true honoring, this is what I discovered.

I did not have to look far for an example, only to my own family, my Grandfather, Lazaro Trinidad. Born in 1913, the thirteenth of fifteen children, a family of peasants on the island of Negros in the Philippines, who was affectionately known to me as "Grandpa Larry". Grandpa was singled out for some divine reason by the Dutch couple that owned the sugar cane plantation where he was born. They were childless and adopted Grandpa.

The Philippines under US Protectorate status recruited Filipinos into the US Armed Forces. The European Continent was the setting stage for Nazi Germany's aggression. In addition, there were rumors in the Far East, which began to worry my Grandfather. This would be the pivotal moment for him to want to become American. He believed in America and he felt that serving this great country would be a small price to pay. He began debating with his adoptive parents to follow this dream. He was given their blessing and in 1930 he enlisted. According to Grandpa, after two years of honorable service, he was granted Permanent Resident Status, the pre-cursor to his citizenship.

The next ten years were spent in service upon a destroyer as a "mess hall cook." Then came Pearl Harbor, and the Japanese ravished the Philippines. To this day, it is unclear what happened to his parents. He never saw them again, nor most of his family. After the war, Grandpa would still serve the Navy, as a civilian welder at the Naval shipyards. Upon his retirement, we encouraged him to take a trip back to the island of Negros to find out what had become of his family. He found three remaining siblings. It was emotional and I know he wondered what life would have been like had he never left. He returned from that trip with no regrets. In essence, he had already counted the cost when he decided in favor of America.

By virtue of where I sit to write this essay, I know he did not fight a foreign enemy so I could end up a native criminal, nor did he envision me without my freedom, having taken for granted what he fought for. In final retrospect, it's much more than the "Holiday" set aside to honor Veterans. It's how we live our daily lives. I now understand the sacrifice and continual commitment it cost Grandpa and all Veterans.

From this day, forward I will live my life to honor you. You are appreciated.

Lazaro Trinidad
1913-1991
Retired United States Navy

